The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE 27TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, today we celebrate the 27th anniversary of the first Earth Day. In the spirit of that celebration, it behooves us to remember how the first Earth Day came about, and what brought it about. I know the distinguished occupant of the Chair participates in Earth Day activities and is deeply interested and involved in environmental matters. Perhaps he also will be interested in a little history of what happened.

In the 1960's, a series of events occurred that shocked the Nation into an awareness of the need to protect the environment. Rachel Carson wrote her famous book, ''Silent Spring,'' in 1962. The country was appalled by her revelations of the destruction caused to our environment by widespread pesticide use—DDT and others, for example. Then, in 1969, another extraordinary event occurred—the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland caught fire. When a river catches fire, it certainly is an eye catcher. Why did it catch fire? It was so polluted with oils and other substances that it suddenly burst into flames. That is, somebody threw a match into the river and it caught fire. Extraordinary.

So in the early 1960's, a Democratic President, President Lyndon Johnson, laid the foundation for the major environmental laws that came later. He signed antipollution and open space legislation into law, including the creation of the Redwood National Park, the Wilderness Act, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I might say, Mr. President, it was moneys from that Land and Water Conservation Fund that enabled me, as Governor of our State of Rhode Island, to purchase land for open space, wetlands, and parks. The improvements we made continue to give pleasure to thousands of Rhode Islanders in the past and will do so for literally millions of individuals in the future. That is a wonderful law, the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

When Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin proposed the idea of Earth Day in 1970, even he didn't know how it would galvanize Americans into action, how it would catch the imagination of Americans. The first Earth Day was a phenomenal success, a reflection of America's strong conviction for cleaning up the environment. I can remember some of the activities that took place on Earth Day where I was—cleaning up the riverbeds where there were old tires and dishwashers and refrigerators and many other things thrown over the bank and down into the stream. We took time to clean our nearby streams, as countless others did. Ours was one small activity in one small section of the country, but it made a difference.

The years that immediately followed the first Earth Day were a vibrant period for environmental legislation. The key players in that legislation, Mr. President, were on the very committee on which you serve so ably, the Environment and Public Works Committee. We remember that Democrats like Jennings Randolph from West Virginia and Ed Muskie from Maine worked closely with several Republicans, including Howard Baker from Tennessee and Bob Stafford from Vermont. Indeed, their success was the result of a nonpartisan, bipartisan cooperation. Magnificent progress was made.

It is hard to think that, before 1970, none of the laws or institutions that I am going to rattle off existed; but then they passed in 1970, 1971, and 1972. Indeed, under President Richard Nixon, the Environmental Protection Agency was created. We never had an Environmental Protection Agency. The President's Council on Environmental Quality was born; the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, the guiding law upon which so many of our acts depend; the Clean Air Act; the Clean Water Act; the Endangered Species Act. I wasn't here at the time, but the Endangered Species Act passed on the floor of the Senate 92 to 0. That is the way the Senate felt about environmental laws.

Then another Republican President, Ronald Reagan, had the United States take the lead internationally in environmental matters, and we signed the Montreal Protocol in 1987, to eliminate the production of chlorofluorocarbons, the gaseous culprit responsible for the destruction of the ozone layer. It was under still another Republican President, George Bush, that the 1990 Clean Air Amendments were passed. In addition, President Bush personally went to the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro and signed the International Treaty on Global Climate. So we have seen Republicans and Democrats in the White House exhibit strong leadership. This was a bipartisan effort.

This bipartisanship has brought about tremendous, tangible change. Let us review the bidding to see what has taken place in the past 27 years. Have these acts done a good job—the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Endangered Species Act? It is a remarkable story.

Before the EPA, before all of the laws now on the books, there was lead in our air and sewage in our rivers. I can remember at the time when I was Secretary of the Navy, we took a trip on the *Sequoia,* the Presidential yacht, down the Potomac River here in Washington. I invited my British counterpart, the equivalent of our Navy Secretary, to join us. It was a lovely July evening, calm and quiet, not a ripple on the water. As we started down the river, the propeller churned up the water and it was like going for a ride down the sewer. The smells were so overpowering from the polluted river water that we all had to retreat inboard to have our dinner. That is not the way it is now, though. In those days, two-thirds of the rivers, lakes, and streams of the United States were considered nonfishable and nonswimmable. Now the reverse is true. Two-thirds of the rivers and lakes and streams in America are considered fishable and swimmable. Every year that percentage rises.

What have we done on auto emissions? Well, from 1970 to 1994, the number of vehicle miles traveled in the United States increased by 111 percent, more than a doubling of VMT. Yet, in that same period, the combined emissions of the 6 principal air pollutants dropped by 24 percent. In other words, we had dramatic emissions reductions while vehicle miles traveled shot up. Lead in the air—which everybody knows has a terrible effect on the mental development of children, particularly in congested inner cities—was reduced by 98 percent—a 98-percent reduction of lead in the air.

How did that come about? Because we mandated the use of unleaded gasoline in the mid-1970s. What an achievement.

The Montreal Protocol, as I mentioned before, has been a tremendous success. Let's look at this chart. The Montreal Protocol was signed in 1985. Since then, because of the restrictions on the production of chlorofluorocarbons—it is now projected that the ozone layer will gradually recover, and return to pre-ozone-hole levels by the year 2050. What are chlorofluorocarbons? They are cooling agents found in refrigerators and air conditioners in our homes, offices and automobiles. Because of the leadership shown by President Reagan and later President Bush, we have made great progress. This red line shows what would have happened without the controls of the Montreal Protocol.

Instead, we have been able not only to stabilize chlorine loadings, but actually reduce them. That line will go down and down. All of this has tremendous effects on what comes through this protective shield, the upper atmosphere.

Now, what about the Endangered Species Act? That is something the Presiding Officer has worked so hard on. The endangered species are—perhaps—the proverbial ''canaries in the coal mine''; that is, when a canary keels over, it shows there is dangerous gas. It gives you a hint that something is wrong.

The best way to judge how successful we have been in preserving the habitat is to look at how the plant and animal species are doing. If the plant and animal life around us is in trouble, that means trouble for us in the future.

The Endangered Species Act is geared toward preserving the habitat. How do you save the animals? You preserve the habitat and thus bring them back from the brink of extinction. Since its enactment in 1973, by a vote of 92 to 0 in this Chamber—not a single Senator in 1973 voted against that law—the populations of whooping

cranes, brown pelicans, and the peregrine falcon have come back from near extinction.

The bald eagle has increased from a low of 400 nesting pairs in 1963 to just over 4,700 pairs in 1995. Think of it. In the Continental United States, the lower 48 States, as they say, there were only 400 nesting pairs of bald eagles in 1963. Thirty-two years later—in 1995—there are now 4,700 nesting pairs. Remarkable.

The grizzly bear has been saved from extinction and brought back from the endangered list to the threatened list. The California gray whale and American alligator have recovered to the point where they have been removed from the endangered list.

Of the 960 species currently listed on the endangered species list, more than 40 percent are stable and gaining ground. And for many others the rate of decline has been reduced.

The recovery of the striped bass is another success story. The striped bass is a magnificent fighting fish, one that has been valued up and down the Atlantic coast for centuries.

It is interesting to hear what the original settlers said, and what Capt. John Smith said in 1614, over 350 years ago. This is what he said about the striped bass. ''I myself, at the turning of the tide, have seen such multitudes pass out of a pond that it seemed to me that one might go over their backs dryshod.'' There were so many it seemed you could walk across on their backs.

So it was with great alarm that we learned of the precipitous decline of the striped bass in the late 1970's. And, by 1983, commercial harvest had dropped by 77 percent as compared to the previous year. By 1983, the sports harvest of striped bass had declined by 85 percent from 4 years earlier. So we inaugurated an Emergency Striped Bass Study by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. I am proud to say that this legislation came out of the Environment and Public Works Committee.

And fewer than 20 years later, through the cooperative efforts of State fish and wildlife agencies and the Federal agencies, most Atlantic striped bass stocks have recovered to healthy pre-1979 levels. This dramatic turnaround is proof that, if we act quickly to reduce the threats and preserve habitat, we can recover imperiled species.

Wetlands loss has slowed dramatically. When it comes to wetlands conservation, perhaps no program has been as successful as the North American Waterfowl Management Plan—signed 11 years ago, in 1986, by the United States and Canada, and later, Mexico. Under this plan, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, partnerships are established bringing together Federal and local governments, and nonprofit groups such as Ducks Unlimited, and private donors, as well as landowners—to work on the conservation of wetlands, and there are Federal dollars to match private contributions.

To date, well over 4 million acres have been protected, restored, or enhanced—some of it through easement, and some of it through purchases by the United States and Canada. And 20 million additional acres are protected in Mexico.

Has it done any good? Listen to this: In 1996, there was the largest migration of waterfowl in the previous 40 years—89.5 million ducks, which is 7 million more than 2 years before, and 18 million more than the year before that migrated south for the winter; 90 million ducks, the largest migration in the past 41 years. That came about because of the North American Waterfowl Plan, which I mentioned before.

So it seems that the way that the plan operates, involving partnership between the States, the Federal Government, and private entities, it represents the wave of the future, which all of us ought to think about as we ponder how fast we can save these wetlands and wildlife habitat areas.

We are not done. We should not rest on our laurels. Some of the trickiest and most difficult environmental problems lie ahead, and we have to address these with purpose and ingenuity. We took on the formidable environmental challenges of the past and were successful. Now we look to the future. We shouldn't just rest on our laurels, as I said. We have to remember that these efforts can never succeed without strong and sincere bipartisan cooperation—Republicans and Democrats working together; Congress and the administration, likewise.

In conclusion, I just want to quote probably the greatest environmental President of them all, Teddy Roosevelt. This is what he said 86 years ago. ''Of all the questions which can come before this Nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us.''

Those are pretty good words for us to remember as we celebrate Earth Day in 1997—words to be considered while thinking of the future and preserving the environment for our children and grandchildren and those who come after us.

''HUMMON'' TALMADGE HIGHWAY BEING DEDICATED TOMORROW IN HAMPTON, GA

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, tomorrow, down in Hampton, GA, a highway will be dedicated to one of our former colleagues, the distinguished former Senator Herman Talmadge. It would be fun to be there tomorrow and see Herman's reaction when the honor is announced at a luncheon in the ballroom of the Atlanta Motor Speedway.

Fewer than one-fourth (23) of today's Members of the Senate were here when Senator Talmadge was. Because of that, I have decided to include in the RECORD an extensive interview with former Senator Talmadge published by The Macon, GA, Telegraph. That newspaper's Randall Savage conducted the interview.

Mr. Savage asked good questions and Herman Talmadge gave great answers. His assessment of many things about America reflect the fact that Herman Talmadge still has the good judgment that he possessed while in the Senate.

Mr. President, accordingly, I ask unanimous consent that the February 11, 1997, interview, headed ''Hummon'' be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the interview was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Macon Telegraph, Feb. 11, 1997]

''HUMMON''

(By Randall Savage)

HAMPTON.—Former U.S. Sen. Herman E. Talmadge is 83 now.

He doesn't dip, smoke or chew anymore, although he's not above nibbling on a cigar now and then. A year ago, doctors removed a cancerous tumor from his throat, and he underwent 25 radiation treatments.

''They can't find any trace of it now,'' he said.

But Talmadge no longer runs two miles every day, as he did for more than 20 years. He gave that up five years ago, opting for brisk daily walks instead. Arthritis, however, had ended even those. The condition hinders his mobility, and he walks with a cane.

''I got to be an old man at 82. I was a young man until then,'' Talmadge said.

Nevertheless, Talmadge, one of Georgia's most powerful politicians, is as politically astute today as he was when he left the Senate 17 years ago. And he's still delighted to share his views on politics and the world:

Question. You held political office for more than 30 years as a Democrat. What do you think of the Democratic Party?

Answer. I think well of some of them and poorly of others. I think they helped the Republican Party gain power by continuing to push their liberal policies when the country was becoming more conservative.

Question. Do you still consider your self a Democrat?

Answer. I guess you could classify me as an independent. I vote for the man or woman. For a number of years, Democrats—the national Democrats in particular—have become more and more liberal in their thinking and actions.

Question. How so?

Answer. Excessive taxes. Excessive spending. Excessive regulations, Excessive government.

Question. And you think the Democratic Party is involved too heavily in that?

Answer. Yes. The Republican takeover (of Congress) slowed down the Democrats. They'd been reacting to popular thinking instead of pursuing sound policies. They lean whichever way the wind is blowing.

Questions. What do you think of House Speaker Newt Gingrich?

Answer. I think you have to give Newt Gingrich credit with leading the Republican revolution that resulted in the Republicans taking over both houses of Congress. But I don't know what I think of him. I listen to him talk and I find myself agreeing with a lot of what he's saying. But he irritates me. When he gets through speaking, I'm irritated over what he said. I don't know why.

Question. The Republican takeover of Congress—what do you think of that?